

but to complain is useless, and to endure almost impossible; but existence is certainly less irksome in the mild distraction of this various life. . . .

Tell my mother that as it is the fashion among the dandies of this place — that is, the officers, for there are no others — not to wear waistcoats in the morning, her new studs come into fine play, and maintain my reputation of being a great judge of costume, to the admiration and envy of many subalterns. I have also the fame of being the first who ever passed the Straits with two canes, a morning and an evening cane. I change my cane as the gun fires, and hope to carry them both, on to Cairo. It is wonderful the effect these magical wands produce. I owe to them even more attention than to being the supposed author of — what is it? — I forget!

These Straits, by-the-bye — that is, the passage for the last ten miles or so, to Gib, between the two opposite coasts of Africa and Europe, with the ocean for a river, and the shores all mountains — is by far the sublimest thing I have yet seen. . . . When I beg you to write, I mean my beloved Sa, because I know you think it a bore; but do all as you like. To her and to my dearest mother a thousand kisses. Tell Ealph I have not forgotten my promise of an occasional letter; and my dear pistol-cleaner, that he forgot to oil the locks, which rusted in conveyance. I thank the gods daily I am freed of Louis Clement, who would have been an expense and a bore. Tell [Washington] Irving he has left a golden name in Spain. Few English visit Gibraltar. Tell Lord Mahon, inquiries made after his health. Adieu, my beloved *padre*.

Your most affectionate son,  
B. D.<sup>1</sup>

CADIZ, July  
14.

We passed a very pleasant week at Gibraltar, after our return from Konda. We dined with the Governor at his cottage at Europa, a most charming pavilion, and met a most agreeable party. Lady Don was well enough to dine with us, and did me the honour of informing me that I was the cause of . the exertion, which, though of course a fib, was nevertheless flattering. She is, though very old, without exception one of the most agreeable personages that I ever met, excessively acute and *piquante*, with an aptitude of detecting character, and a tact in assuming it, very remarkable. To listen to her you would think you were charming away the hour with a blooming beauty in Mayfair; and, though excessively infirm,

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, pp. 3-10.